

Consolations against the Fears of Death.

21
A
S E R M O N

Preach'd on

SUNDAY, *Nov.* 4. 1711.

At St. Peter's at Sandwich, in Kent.

T O

Richard Partridge,
OF DEAL.

Condemn'd at the Guildhall at Sandwich, October 11,
1711. for the Murder committed on his Son *Thomas*
Partridge, and Executed the 10th of November,
1711. at Sandwich.

With an Account of the said Murder ; and his last
Dying Speech and Confession.

By GER. DE GOLS, Rector of the said Parish,
and Ordinary of that Court.

Publsh'd at the Request of several of the Auditors.

LONDON: Printed for J. Baker, at the Black Boy
in Pater-noster-Row. 1711. Price 4 d.



To the READER.

THIS Discourse having been preach'd on an extraordinary Occasion, and being forced from me by the Importunity of several of the Auditors to make it publick, I presume it may not be improper to give some Account of this sad Accident, and withall of the Behaviour of this Person in his last Minutes.

RICHARD PARTRIDGE of Deal, Baker, aged about 55 Years, a Man of a most profligate Life in all manner of Debauchery, especially in Drunkenness, us'd often in his drunken Fits to commit several Outrages, especially in his Family, to his Wife and Children; for which reason they were often obliged, not without advice of his nearest Relations, and Physicians, to deal with him as a Man distracted and beside himself, till his Distraction by Drink was over. The Evening before this sad Disaster happen'd, he was in the same drunken Madness (for otherwise it cannot be call'd, and so he often since his Condemnation has himself justly styl'd it) and being then hinder'd from committing those Insolencies he us'd to practise, it seems that having forsaken God, he fell from Sin to Sin, and watched for an Opportunity to make himself more exceeding sinful.

On the 30th of August, 1711. he arose about 7 a Clock in the Morning; but alas! got drunk again that same Morning before Nine, and walking with his youngest Son Thomas Partridge, aged about 20 Years, to the House of John Partridge his eldest Son, he there met with Jacob, the Son of Mr. Lewis de Haen, who came to return a Gun that belong'd to Richard Partridge, which was lent him by his Son Thomas, and foolishly and unhappily return'd it charg'd. By this unfortunate Meeting he took occasion to quarrel, both with Jacob de Haen and his Son Thomas, and asking his Son Thomas, with many Imprecations, why he lent De

To the Reader.

Haen his Gun, swore at the same time, that he would shoot him : Upon which the Boy, sensible of his Father's Fury, tho' not of so dreadful an Intention, mov'd away from him ; at which his Father took up a Stone and flung it at him, but miss'd him : Upon which he took the Gun, and fir'd at his Son ; but the Gun snapping, he cock'd it again, and swore again, that God might damn him, if he would not kill him ; and fir'd, and shot his Son in the back part of his Head, so that the Shot came out through his Face again, of which he immediately died. Richard Partridge was presently apprehended, and carried before Josiah Lane, Esq; Mayor of Deal, who immediately sent him to Richard Solly, Esq; Mayor of the Port of Sandwich, Deal being a Member of, and under the Jurisdiction of the said Port, where he was committed and tried, October 11, 1711. He acknowledg'd the Fact, but deny'd that he knew the Gun was charg'd ; but several Witnesses deposing, that he swore between the Snapping and the Firing, that he would shoot his Son, the Jury found him guilty of Wilful Murder ; Wilful being without any immediate Provocation or Quarrel.

The Right Worshipful the Mayor of Sandwich, in tender Compassion to his Soul, knowing very well how bad a Liver he had been, and how very unfit he was to die, gave him the utmost Time, more than any ever had in the like case, hoping he might the better fit himself for so great and weighty a Change.

And therefore I think it proper now to give some Account of his Deportment and last Minutes, that as his Sins are manifest and disclos'd to the World, his Sorrow and Repentance may be manifest also.

Before his Condemnation he flatter'd himself with the Hopes of Life ; but when he found there was no room for Hopes, that he was condemn'd, that he must die ; then he humbled himself greatly before God, set heartily about the Work of Repentance, and thought only how to fit himself for Death.

He was indeed very ignorant of his Religion, and by his habitual Course of Sinning had stifled his Conscience, and

To the Reader.

was almost insensible ; but God truly wrought great Things for him, and wonderfully bless'd the Endeavours that were us'd for his Conversion, and made him so very sensible of his Sins, that it was both an Amazement and Comfort to me to behold it.

He justified God in this Judgment, as the just Reward for his manifold Sins, he acknowledg'd his Sins, and humbly confess'd them in his Prayers, all what he could recollect he did particularize : But who can understand his Errors ? Who knows how oft he offendeth ? And therefore he constantly beg'd Mercy of God for those Sins which he had forgotten, well knowing that God knew them, that they were not hid from his All-seeing Eye ; and therefore us'd the Words of the Psalmist, Lord cleanse thou me from my secret Faults. His Grief and Sorrow, his Tears, were particularly great for that last dreadful Act of murdering his own Son. Oh the Remembrance of that pierced his Soul, and the Thoughts of it melted him in Tears ; and therefore he earnestly pray'd, Deliver me from Blood-guiltiness, O God of my Salvation : Let the Blood of Jesus, that speaketh Mercy and Pardon, and no Vengeance, blot out the Guilt and Stain of that innocent Blood which I have shed. And in his Confession to me before his Death, he told me the very Secrets of that Fact, and desired me only to acquaint the World, that God had found him out, and that his Condemnation was just.

Nay, be bless'd God, abundantly bless'd God, that suffer'd him to come to this Judgment, believing it to be the only means to bring him to Heaven ; and tho' bitter and scandalous to the World, yet he bless'd God for it, that he might have his Shame in this World, and might be saved from eternal Confusion ; and often cry'd out, Welcome Death, welcome Gallows ; for now I hope I shall come to God, now I hope I shall be saved. Nay, he spake with all the Sincerity of a dying Man and a Penitent, that if he had Ten Lives to forfeit, and were in his Choice to be in the same State he was in before Condemnation, that he would rather die ten times on a Gallows, than chuse such a Life of Sin as he led before.

He

To the Reader.

He freely confess'd that he was the Cause of this sad Judgment to himself, and sore Affliction to his Family; that the Fault lay chiefly at his own Door; and since the World had much blam'd his Wife, making her very black and barbarous, he pray'd to God, in the Hearing of many, to pardon those Slanderers, and justified her before several Persons to me, and my Brethren of the Clergy, and with Tears begg'd of me to vindicate her in his own Words, who was now a dying Man; Not (says he) that she has no Sin, but I have been often the sad Occasion of her sinning, and that he would die on it, that she had been as good a Wife as ever Man had: But he, alas! to his great Sorrow, as bad a Husband as ever Woman had; and therefore he hoped that God would be the greater Comforter to her.

He pray'd heartily for his Wife and Children, that God would keep them in his Mercy from Sin; he bless'd them with Prayers and Tears, and they all ask'd his Pardon and Blessing, as of a dying Father on their Knees, in my Presence; and he did bless and pardon them, and his Soul was greatly comforted with it: He pray'd God for them, to keep them from Insults, Affronts, Reproaches and Disgrace, which might, because of him, be cast upon them; that God would give others Grace not to do it, them Patience to endure it, and Mercy, so to behave themselves as never to deserve it.

*He put his only Trust in the Merits and Sufferings of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Redeemer of the World, believing him to be the only Saviour, and that there is no other Name given under Heaven, whereby Mankind may be saved, but the Name of Christ; and that this Christ, by his once offering of himself upon the Cross to God, for the Sins of Man, has made a full Satisfaction for the Sins of all Men, and for his Sins in particular; and that he embrac'd that Jesus by a sincere Faith, trusting in his Mercy, that he is both able and willing to save him from the Wrath to come; and therefore he said often, My Jesu, in thy Hands I commend my Spirit, for thou hast redeemed me: Save me, my God, for in thee do I trust; O let me never be confounded. He earnestly pray'd with thousand
Tears*

To the Reader.

Tears for the Lord's Supper, that Sacrament of Comfort to every Penitent, that Viaticum of Mercy to every departing Soul, and I administred it to him the Evening before he died, and he profess'd that he found unutterable Consolation by it.

He declar'd himself to be in full and perfect Charity with all Men; pray'd for all Men, and had a very particular grateful Acknowledgment, and Sense of the Favour, which Mr. Mayor, out of Pity to his Soul, had for him, in giving him so much Time, and doubted not, but it did further much to his Soul's Health; and truly, I believe through the Mercies of God it did.

He heartily pray'd all Men to take Example by him; that his Judgment might be a Warning to others, and especially to those that were his former Companions, and Partakers with him in his Sins: And what ought particularly to be remembered, that some Days before he died, he sent Word to some of his Fellow Drunkards to look now upon him, to forsake their Sins, and amend by his Judgment, that they might see his End, stand in Awe and tremble, lest they should come to the same Condemnation.

He was wonderful willing to go to his Death; for when he was call'd away, and his Wife, Children and Relations, hanging about him, with Tears and Prayers, he said, Stay me not, for I go to my Saviour; weep not, weep not, for me, for I go to my God. He pray'd heartily all the Way he went; and after Prayers were made at the Place of Execution, he prostrated himself on the Ground, commending his Soul to God.

He said but little to the People, only that he justified God's Judgment, and thank'd God that brought him to that Death; advis'd and pray'd all Men to avoid Drunkenness, Swearing, Passion, Murder, and profaning the Lord's Day; and then beg'd their Prayers to God for him. He chearfully sung the first Part of the 25th Psalm, and that being ended repeated the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and some short recommendatory Prayers, and so was turn'd off: And indeed he exerted himself as far as human Nature was capable of, and we have no Reason to doubt but that he died a true Penitent, and that God has received his Soul in Mercy.

This

To the Reader.

This is the Account which I thought proper to give of him. God in his infinite Mercy keep all Men from such Sin and such Judgments. I am not ignorant of the many Imperfections of this following Discourse, and am sure that my sincere Intentions are much the better Part of it ; but we can't all offer Gold and Jewels to the Building of the Tabernacle ; even those were received that brought only Rams Skins and Goats Hair ; but such as it is God make it in some wise tend to our Good, to live well, that we may have the greater Comfort in Life, and the surer Hope in Death : And that this Discourse may do as much Good in the Publication, as it was favourably received in the Hearing, and piously intended in the Preaching, is the hearty Prayer of him that is in Christ Jesus,



Your humble Servant,

DE GOLS.

Con-

Consolations against the Fears of Death.

A
S E R M O N

Preach'd on

SUNDAY, Nov. 4. 1711.

TO A

Condemn'd Person.

PSAL. xxiii. 4.

Yea, tho' I walk thro' the Valley of the Shadow of Death, I will fear no Evil; for thou art with me; thy Rod and thy Staff they comfort me.

IT is a very excellent Expression of David in the 37th Psalm, Ver. 37. *Mark the perfect Man, and behold the upright; for the end of that Man is Peace.* Righteousness and Piety make Men the Favourites of Heaven; that alone has the Promises of the Life that now is, and that which is to come; they have the Comforts of God here, and they are sanctified for Glory hereafter.

Sin too has its Reward; but alas! in a very different Manner. Sinners may flourish for a Season, and be deem'd the happiest of Men, because they have the Affluence of transitory Pleasures; but their Felicities, like their Enjoyment, are momentary, and equally

Pfal. 37.
35.

qually fading, their Beauty decays, and their Glory is turn'd to Dishonour, as the Psalmist observes, *I have seen the wicked in great Prosperity, and spreading himself like a green Bay-tree; yet he passed away, and lo he was not, yea, I sought him, but he could not be found.* When the Scene is done, and Men pass off from the Stage of the World, there remains nothing to a Sinner, but the melancholy Reflections of Sins committed, Mercy abus'd, Time mis-spent, Salvation neglected, a Conscience full of Fear, and Terrour, and the certain, but miserable Expectation of a future Judgment: so is their Life a seeming Happiness, a Delusion, their End a certain Misery, *for there is no Peace to the wicked, says my God; for, Son remember that thou in thy Life-time receivest thy good Things, but now art thou tormented.*

Very different from this is the State of the pious Souls, tho' they may not be, perhaps, the greatest, the most wealthy of this Life; yet they are rich in Grace and Love of God, he is their Guide, he is their Comfort, tho' they may be fed sometimes with the Bread of Tears, and tho' God makes them drink a Cup of Sorrow, yet he has a Cup of divine Comforts for them, and he puts their Tears in his Bottle; their inward Consolations thro' Christ, are greater than the outward Afflictions can be for Christ; and they have the assured Hope of that Glory, *which Eye has not seen, nor Ear heard, nor the Heart of Man can understand*, which God has laid up in Heaven, where *Sighs and Tears, and Sorrow is no more.*

Such is their Life, and their End is full of Hope: He that lives in the Fear of God, assuredly dies in his Favour; he that has glorified God on Earth, has the Promise of being glorified by God in Heaven; their Minds are easy, their Conscience serene, they know in whom they have believed; that when they have *run their Course, and kept their Faith*; that Glory and Honour is laid up in Heaven for them: They know God to be their Father, Christ their Redeemer, and in that Hope long for the Time of their Deliverance; and joyfully meet Death, triumph over it, in the Death of Christ, are easy and tranquil, and can say with David, in the Words of our Text; *Yea, tho' I walk thro' the Valley of the Shadow of Death, I will fear no Evil,*

Fears of DEATH.

3

Evil, for thou art with me, thy Rod and thy Staff they comfort me.

But is there no Hope for a Sinner ! Is there no Comfort for a miserable Transgressor ! Has God forgotten to be merciful ? Is there no Mercy, because I have so long abus'd it ! Is there no Way, tho' I have led a wicked Life, to come to a happy End ? Is it impossible to obtain Salvation, because I have neglected it Days without Number ? Is there no Comfort, no Hopes in God ? Oh yes ; God is a God of Mercy ; he has made no Man to be miserable ; he delighteth not in the Death of a Sinner, but wills that all Men should repent and be saved. God has appointed no Man to Wrath, but to obtain Salvation thro' Jesus Christ our Lord. Faith and Repentance are the Conditions of the Gospel ; if we do not repent we must perish : But if we do repent, if we be humbled and sorry for our Sins, God will forgive : *For if we confess and forsake our Sins, we shall obtain Mercy ; for God is faithful and just, to forgive us our Sins, and to cleanse us from all Unrighteousness.*

So then, if we be penitent, we have Hopes ; if we believe in the Lord Jesus, we have Ground and Foundation for Hope ; *for there is no Condemnation for them that are in Christ Jesus, that walk not after the Flesh, but after the Spirit.* And if they have, thro' the Delusion of the Devil, followed the World, and forsaken God, if they return with the Prodigal, and humble themselves, God will receive them, have Compassion upon them, and rejoice at their Conversion and Salvation. Rom. 8. 1.

Such is the blessed and heavenly Nature of Repentance ; it blots out our Sins, and sets us upon the same Level as if we had not sinned at all ; and therefore God promises a Penitent that he will remember his Sins no more, and that his Iniquities shall not be his Ruin ; and thence we may see both the Necessity and the Excellency of Repentance ; so necessary, that without it we cannot be saved ; without it, we are in our Sins, God our Enemy, and it is a fearful thing to fall into the Hands of an angry God : Such is the Excellency, that it moves God to lay down his Anger ; it melts his Heart, and makes the Bowels of his Compassion earn over us, unites God to Man, and Man to God, makes us easie and happy in God,

Consolations against the

and glory against Satan, tho' I have sinned, I have repented of my Sin, and *the Blood of Jesus has wip'd away mine Offences.*

There is none righteous, no not one, we have all sinned ; the most holy must continually pray, *Enter not into Judgment with thy Servant, O Lord ;* the most wicked is not excluded from Repentance, from Mercy ; the Throne of Grace is open for all Penitents, and there's Joy with the Angels of God, there's Joy in Heaven, when great Sinners come to that Throne to confess their Sins, and ask Mercy that they may be saved.

And if the greatest of Offenders do repent, they are sure of meeting with a good and gracious God to forgive ; and tho' they may forfeit their Lives here on Earth, they may save their Souls ; tho' they may be condemn'd in this World, their Souls may be dear and precious in the sight of God ; tho' they have liv'd as Sinners, they may die Saints ; tho' they have liv'd without God, they may die in the Mercy of God, and thro' Jesus glory against Death and the Terrours of it : And say with *David* in our Text, *Tho' I walk thro' the Valley of the Shadow of Death I will fear no Evil, for thou art with me, thy Rod and thy Staff they comfort me.*

And since it is your unhappy Portion, your Lot, that you must soon walk thro' that dreadful Valley of the Shadow of Death ; we thought it proper to strengthen you in your Faith, to further you in your Repentance, to comfort you in this sore Affliction and Judgment, by setting before you the Consolations against the Fears of Death, by *Christ* our Saviour ; that when ever you tread that way, you may fear no Evil, having made your Peace with God by a sincere Repentance, and that *God may be with you, his Rod and his Staff may comfort thee.*

Wo unto me ! What have I brought upon my self, may you say, oh my Soul, how bitter is it to forsake the Lord my God, and that his Fear has not been before my Eyes. How have I angered my God ! How have I provok'd my Saviour ! How have I grieved the good Spirit of God ! But have Mercy upon me, O my God, for I repent me of my Sins ; cast not my Soul away ; have Pity upon me ; let me be dear to thee
for

Fears of DEATH.

5

for Christ his sake; wash me in his Blood, and my Soul being purified; let this Death, tho' bitter to me, be a Door thro' Christ to Eternal Life.

There be Comforts in God, and they are not small; there are Consolations in Christ Jesus, and they are exceeding great; and this being the last *Sunday* that you can appear in the House of God, lift up your Heart to the Lord, and may the God of Consolation, the Comforter of the Distressed, hear your's and our united Prayers for you, and bless and apply his Consolations to your Soul, that you may know and feel that your Redeemer liveth, and that God is reconciled to you.

And therefore that you may be comforted against the Fears of Death, we will with the Grace of God consider,

- I. What Death is in it self, and what to a Sinner.
- II. What Death is to a penitent Christian, and what Consolations there be for a Penitent to support him against the Fears of Death.
- III. We'll apply it to you that art under the Condemnation of Death, and also to our selves.

I begin with the first, namely, to consider what Death is in it self, and what to a Sinner.

Death is generally, and very rightly defin'd to be the Privation of natural Life, by the Separation of the Soul from the Body, which if we consider in it self is a most amazing thing, the very Thoughts of it strike a Terroure to the Mind of Man, and make the Heart and Knees of the most severe *Stoick* to tremble; for there is such an inexpressible Love, such a close Union, between the Soul and Body, that the very Thoughts of a Separation are as amazing, as the Love and Affection they bear to each other. Lord, when we consider, that this Body must be robb'd, left, depriv'd, and forsaken of its Soul, that Fountain of Life, and Being to it; and must be not only senseless, dull, unactive, but a Prey to Worms, the most loathsome Spectacle, and ghastly Object in the World, be crumbled to Dust, and return to its primitive Earth, Lord how it confounds our Thoughts!

When

When we consider that the Soul, that Eternal Being, that Spring of Life, must be pluck'd away from its Habitation, and remove we know not where (I speak naturally) whither to Felicity or Sorrow, the Body ignorant of its better Part, the Soul unmindful of its beloved dwelling Place, and Organ for all its Works, and not to know, when, where or how, they will be re-united. Oh how amazing are these Thoughts, how terrible are these Considerations, the most puzzling, the most melancholy, and had we not the Gospel of Jesus, the most astonishing and confounding Meditation.

- The Cause and Original of Death and this Separation is the Sin of Mankind, so the *Holy Ghost* tells us, *In the Day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.*
- Gen. 2. 17. Where it is threatned as a Punishment for Offences, and we find it inflicted for Sin. And St. Paul tells us, *That by one Man Sin enter'd into the World, and Death by Sin, and so Death pass'd upon all Men, for that all have sinned, and the Wages of Sin is Death.*
- Gen. 3. 19. Rom. 5. 12. Rom. 6. 23. Rom. 1. 13. And the Author of the Book of Wisdom, says, *God has not made Death.* Whence it is plain, that Death in it self is a Judgment of God on Sin, the Height of all Fear, the superlative Degree of Terrours; and that no one by Nature, as he is a Sinner, can say, *When I walk thro' the Valley of the Shadow of Death I will fear no Evil,* for it is the Height of Evil, it is the King of Terrours.
- Chap. 18. 14. So *Job* call'd Death *the King of Terrours*; and indeed very proper, not only because it robs us of our present Being, but excludes us from Grace and Goodness of God, which we enjoy in this World, deprives us of Time and Means of Repentance, and brings Men to the *Terrours of the Lord*, to Judgment; For it is appointed for Men once to die, and after Death Judgment; For we must all appear before the Judgment-Seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his Body, according to that he has done, whether it be good or bad; and this makes Death so very terrible, because of that dreadful Judgment it brings Men to; for that Judgment is call'd the *Terrour of the Lord*: For the Day of the Lord is very terrible, who can abide his Coming, a Fire goeth before him, and burneth to the nethermost Hell; for that Day shall burn as
- Heb. 9. 27. 2 Cor. 5. 10. 2 Cor. 5. 11.

Fears of DEATH.

7

as an Oven, and all the Proud, and all that do wickedly, shall be Stubble; for the Wicked shall be turn'd into Hell, and all they that forget God. So that we may easily see that Death in it self is very miserable, and to an impenitent Sinner is a Door to Hell, a Passage to Eternal Destruction, a Deprivation of a temporal Life, and the eternal Mercies of God, and being expos'd to the Wrath and Fury of him that liveth for ever and ever. Mal. 4. 1.

But we come in the second Place to consider,

What Death is to a penitent Christian, and what Consolations there be for a Penitent, to support him against the Fears of Death.

And blessed be God, tho' Death be so terrible in its own Nature, yet that very Death has lost its Terrors, by the Death of Jesus Christ our Saviour, he the only Lord of Life and Death, has swallowed up Death in Victory, and given us this Anthem of Praise, this Song of Triumph, *O Death, where is thy Sting? O Grave, where is thy Victory? The Sting of Death is Sin, and the Strength of Sin is the Law; but Thanks be to God, which giveth us the Victory thro' our Lord Jesus Christ.* So that we find a penitent David to say, *Tho' I walk thro' the Valley of the Shadow of Death, yet will I fear no Evil.* And St. Paul, when he was converted, tells us, *To die is Gain:* And breaks forth in these Words, *Oh wretched Man that I am, who shall deliver me from the Body of this Death;* and assures us that he had a desire to depart, and be with Christ.

This is the Mercy of God to poor miserable forlorn Man, purchas'd for us by *Christ Jesus*, who was sent into the World for this End, to reconcile God to Man, and Man to God, and take away that Curse, which for our Sins lay upon us, *that he might suffer Death for all Men;* and that he by that Death might destroy him that has the Power of Death, that is, *the Devil;* and deliver them who thro' the Fear of Death, were all their Life-time subject to Bondage. Heb. 2: 14. And not only destroy Death, but obtain such a Righteousness for Mankind, that should be able to give them Right and Title to God's Salvation, and totally change and invert the Nature of Death; that that which was the Cause why all died, namely, Sin
being

being overcome, the Righteousness of Christ should be the Cause why all should be made alive ; and that that which thro' the Disobedience of Man, was the Door to Misery to all that died, now thro' the Obedience of the Man Jesus, should be the Door to Salvation to all that believe ; and that Death, before the King of Terrours, might now be the Gate of Heaven, the Entrance to a better Life and eternal Glory.

So must a Penitent look upon Death, as it has lost its Sting, and left it in the Side of the Lord Jesus ; that Death now is so far from hurting him, or separating him from Grace, Mercy, and the beatifick Vision of God, that it will lead him to the immediate Enjoyment of him, bring him to Jesus, the *Fountain of living Waters, to wash away both his Sins and his Tears*, and make him indeed know that it is he only that has the *Keys of Hell and Death*.

And so we find the whole Current of the Sacred Scriptures to tell us, that such is the Nature of Death to every Penitent, every Believer.

Nay even under the Dispensation of the Old Testament, when Christ our Saviour had not yet suffer'd ; but his Sufferings were only promis'd, and assur'd to them by Types and Figures, yet the Virtue of his Death, which in time would come, took even then away the Sting of Death, and gave Life to the penitent Believer. So *David* says, *Right precious in the Sight of the Lord, is the Death of his Saints* ; and *Job* long before him, *I know that my Redeemer liveth* ; and neither *David* nor *Job* could have had any Consolation in their Death, if the Sting thereof had not been taken away ; and he could never have *walk'd in the Valley of the Shadow of Death* without Fear, if God had not been there to support him ; and when old Father *Jacob* died, his last Expression was, *I waited for thy Salvation, O Lord* ; this Salvation he never had in this World, and therefore had Hope in his Death to obtain it in the next.

The Instances in this Particular are many, before the Coming of Christ ; but when Christ had indeed died, and rose again ; when he had bruised the Serpent's Head, and slew Death by Death ; then the Holy Ghost tells us, *Blessed are the Dead that die in the*

Fears of D E A T H

9

the Lord. And Christ himself had told us before, *I am the Resurrection and the Life, he that believeth in me, tho' he were dead, yet shall he live, and who-soever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.* And thence proceeds that sacred Confidence of St. Paul, and other Saints of God, they knew whom they had believed, that their Lord Jesus had overcome the Sharpness of Death, and open'd the Kingdom of Heaven to all Believers, and that he had made Death the Way to his Glory; thence those Exultations, those pious Wishes, those sacred Desires to depart and be with Christ; hence that Consolation, *Tho' I walk in the Valley of the Shadow of Death, I will fear no Evil, for thou art with me, thy Rod and thy Staff they comfort me.*

Having thus given you a general Scheme of the Nature of Death, now under the Dispensation of the Gospel to every penitent Sinner; I proceed to the particular Consolations against the Fears of Death; and these we'll consider gradually.

And the first Consolation a true Penitent has against the Fears of Death is, that Death delivers him from the many Miseries of this present World. And,

1. From the common Afflictions which outwardly befall us in this World. Few but what know that this is a World of Trouble, a Dale of Tears, where there is no true Satisfaction; but much real Sorrow to a little, and that but seeming Joy; one indeed has a greater Portion of it than another; but he that has the least must own it a troublesome World, that the best of our Days are but Labour and Sorrow; and from these Death gives us a Deliverance, *They rest from their Labours.* Psal. 90.

2. Death delivers us from the Infirmities of the Body. Our poor Bodies, those Houses of Clay, are subject to many Misfortunes, Pains, Troubles, Diseases, and numberless Afflictions to wrack and torment us; when we consider the many various Parts of that wonderful Fabrick, and how many various Distempers assault the whole, and each particular Part; we have reason to admire how we live, and think it a Wonder that ever we be well. We creep thro' Distempers daily, and how acute those Pains, how sharp those Aches be, that are but of common

being overcome, the Righteousness of Christ should be the Cause why all should be made alive ; and that that which thro' the Disobedience of Man, was the Door to Misery to all that died, now thro' the Obedience of the Man Jesus, should be the Door to Salvation to all that believe ; and that Death, before the King of Terrours, might now be the Gate of Heaven, the Entrance to a better Life and eternal Glory.

So must a Penitent look upon Death, as it has lost its Sting, and left it in the Side of the Lord Jesus ; that Death now is so far from hurting him, or separating him from Grace, Mercy, and the beatifick Vision of God, that it will lead him to the immediate Enjoyment of him, bring him to Jesus, the *Fountain of living Waters, to wash away both his Sins and his Tears*, and make him indeed know that it is he only that has the *Keys of Hell and Death*.

And so we find the whole Current of the Sacred Scriptures to tell us, that such is the Nature of Death to every Penitent, every Believer.

Nay even under the Dispensation of the Old Testament, when Christ our Saviour had not yet suffer'd ; but his Sufferings were only promis'd, and assur'd to them by Types and Figures, yet the Virtue of his Death, which in time would come, took even then away the Sting of Death, and gave Life to the penitent Believer. So *David* says, *Right precious in the Sight of the Lord, is the Death of his Saints* ; and *Job* long before him, *I know that my Redeemer liveth* ; and neither *David* nor *Job* could have had any Consolation in their Death, if the Sting thereof had not been taken away ; and he could never have *walk'd in the Valley of the Shadow of Death* without Fear, if God had not been there to support him ; and when old Father *Jacob* died, his last Expression was, *I waited for thy Salvation, O Lord* ; this Salvation he never had in this World, and therefore had Hope in his Death to obtain it in the next.

The Instances in this Particular are many, before the Coming of Christ ; but when Christ had indeed died, and rose again ; when he had bruised the Serpent's Head, and slew Death by Death ; then the Holy Ghost tells us, *Blessed are the Dead that die in the*

the Lord. And Christ himself had told us before, *I am the Resurrection and the Life, he that believeth in me, tho' he were dead, yet shall he live, and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.* And thence proceeds that sacred Confidence of St. Paul, and other Saints of God, they knew whom they had believed, that their Lord! Jesus had overcome the Sharpness of Death, and open'd the Kingdom of Heaven to all Believers, and that he had made Death the Way to his Glory; thence those Exultations, those pious Wishes, those sacred Desires to depart and be with Christ; hence that Consolation, *Tho' I walk in the Valley of the Shadow of Death, I will fear no Evil, for thou art with me, thy Rod and thy Staff they comfort me.*

Having thus given you a general Scheme of the Nature of Death, now under the Dispensation of the Gospel to every penitent Sinner; I proceed to the particular Consolations against the Fears of Death; and these we'll consider gradually.

And the first Consolation a true Penitent has against the Fears of Death is, that Death delivers him from the many Miseries of this present World. And,

1. From the common Afflictions which outwardly befall us in this World. Few but what know that this is a World of Trouble, a Dale of Tears, where there is no true Satisfaction; but much real Sorrow to a little, and that but seeming Joy; one indeed has a greater Portion of it than another; but he that has the least must own it a troublesome World, that the best of *our Days are but Labour and Sorrow*; and from these Death gives us a Deliverance, *They rest from their Labours.* Psal. 90.

2. Death delivers us from the Infirmities of the Body. Our poor Bodies, those Houses of Clay, are subject to many Misfortunes, Pains, Troubles, Diseases, and numberless Afflictions to wrack and torment us; when we consider the many various Parts of that wonderful Fabrick, and how many various Distempers assault the whole, and each particular Part; we have reason to admire how we live, and think it a Wonder that ever we be well. We creep thro' Distempers daily, and how acute those Pains, how sharp those Aches be, that are but of common

Diseases, we know; how much more of those that are fatal, where kind Death is the *Asylum*, the Shelter and Refuge of the miserable, lulls asleep, and takes us quite away from all distracting Pains.

3. So also from the Diseases of the Mind, these are far more acute than those of the Body, their Load is weighty, their Burthen is intollerable! *For a wounded Conscience, who can bear?* These bring Men often to Despair, and Violence, even to destroy themselves, and look for their Solace in Death. Now kind Death delivers us from the Temptations and Insults of the Devil, which so much perplex the Minds of Men.

4. Another Consolation against the Fear of Death is, that it delivers us from Sin; *for he that is dead, says the Apostle, has ceased from Sin*; take it either for Regeneration, or for our natural Death, it is true in both, but especially in the latter Death puts a final Period to our Transgressions; for tho' we be regenerate, and born again by the Spirit of God, and do not sin grossly, and have no Delight in Sin; yet we have the Relicts of Sin, and *the Law of Sin in our Members warring against the Law of the Mind, and bringing us into Captivity to the Law of Sin*; so that we do not that Good which we would, but the Evil which we would not. Whilst we be living we are in continual Danger of falling, by the many and powerful Temptations of the Devil, World, and our own deceitful Hearts, into Sin, and into great and dreadful Sins, which may separate between God and us; and this State of Sin is Misery above all Misery, and therefore St. Paul call'd it *a Thorn in the Flesh* that wounded him and pain'd him to the very Heart. Now Death delivers us not only from the Danger of the greatest Sins, but from all Sins, abolishes and roots out the very Nature of Sin.

And tho' past Sins may justly make us dread the Approach of Death, present Repentance takes off that Dread, and Death to a Penitent has no Terrours. *David's Murder and Adultery truly repented of, never separated him from God, he liv'd in his Love, he died in his Mercy. Manasseh's Witchcraft and Idolatry, Mary Magdalen's Whoredoms, Peter's Denial Paul's Persecution, the Thief's Robberies,*

were

Fears of DEATH.

II

were all repented of; and one found Mercy, the other Pardon; all were receiv'd in God's Favour, tho' they fell in Sin, by Repentance they died in the Love and Peace of God. And therefore if *thou hast followed them in thy Sins, follow them also in thy Repentance and Tears.*

5. Death delivers us not only from Evils past, and present, but prevents those that are to come; *For the Righteous perisheth, and no Man considers in his Heart; and merciful Men are taken away; and no Man understandeth that the Righteous is taken away from the Evil to come.* An Example we have in King Josias, *Behold I will gather thee to thy Fathers, thou shalt go down to thy Grave in Peace, and thy Eyes shall not see all the Evil which I will bring upon this Place.* A Mercy, and a great Mercy; and so God deals sometimes with Sinners too, to take them away, snatch them out of the World by some Judgment, lest their living longer in Sin would become beyond Cure incurable, and should *treasure up for themselves a vast Treasure of Wrath against the Day of Wrath.* And so God deals with you, that your Soul might now be made sensible, and you sav'd; for had God took you sometime before this Judgment, you would have died like a Brute as you liv'd; and if you had escaped this Condemnation, 'tis to be fear'd you would have died impenitent, died in the utmost Load of Sin, died like a Devil; and therefore God suffer'd this to befall you, that you might be stop'd from proceeding in Sin, and so be sav'd; and so St. Paul tells us of the like Blessing to some *Corinthians*, that *they were asleep*; God had cut them off by an untimely Death, *that they might not be condemn'd with the World.*

We know not what is to come, what to Morrow may bring forth, and therefore infinite Wisdom that knows all things, acts wondrous merciful, when he prevents us from falling into such Temptations which we cannot bear, or cuts us off by such Judgments that keep back our Souls from Hell.

6. So again, Death delivers a Penitent from the Judgment of God, which is the just Reward and Consequence of Sin, his Wrath is terrible, and who can stand when God is angry? Now as this is the

St. Am-
brose to
Emp. The-
odos.
2 Kings
22. 20.

most dreadful Judgment that we can imagine, which makes Nature startle ; so the Deliverance from this Misery is the greatest Happiness, Joy, and Comfort, to a Soul that we can think of. And we are very sure this will be one of the most joyful Contemplations of the Blessed, to behold, and admire, what an Abyſs of Woe ! What a Gulph of Horrour and Misery they have escaped thro' Christ Jesus ; and how great and worthy to be praised that Goodness of God is, that by Repentance has deliver'd them from such a never-dying Death !

But let us also take a View of those Consolations we have against the Fears of Death, from the Happiness and Felicity which every Penitent obtains by Death, for Death lulls us not into an Eternal Sleep, for as the Body returns to the Earth whence it was taken, so the Soul returns to God that gave it.

1. And first, Death brings us to Life Eternal, the Gentiles knew, and seem'd to rejoyce in this Truth ; the *Druids* could tell us, *Longa vita mors media est*, that Death was the way to eternal Life : And *Solomon's* Expressions, almost in the same Words, by *Lucretius* : And if Nature assures us this, O how much more Comfort have we from God's Revelation, when we know from the God of Truth, That when this earthly Tabernacle is dissolv'd, we have an House not made with Hands, eternally in the Heavens.

There is Life Eternal, we believe it, it is one of the great Articles of our Faith ; and we see plainly it is not here, nor can it be here, and therefore it must be in the other World, and Death the only way to it.

2. Another Benefit by Death is, that Death perfects our Sanctification, and brings us to a Life of perfect Purity and Holiness, the Image of God is indeed renew'd in us by Faith and Repentance while we be on Earth, but not in its full Perfection, as long as we are clogg'd with this sinful Body, and cloth'd with Rags of Flesh, we cannot be perfect, we cannot be compleatly holy, this Mortality must first put on Immortality, our Sinfulness must be put away, and we made perfect, *holy as our God is holy, pure as he is pure* ; and this is done when our Bodies

are

are purified in the Grave, and our Souls remove there, where *Sin and Iniquity is no more*. And when our Holiness is thus made perfect by Death, we are fitted to see God, and the Sight of God confirms the Saints in their Holiness, because God is that All in all, that the Heart of Man can wish for; so that every Soul that is with God must necessarily be satisfied with the Fulness and Perfection of him, and the Affection so fixed, that they can never be averted from their chief Good, and so must continue holy for ever and ever.

3. Another Consolation against the Fears of Death is, that it translates us to a Life of perfect Love and Peace, such a State the World knows not; this is the Property of Heaven, for we are very certain that Love, Harmony, Peace and Unity, is part of the heavenly Felicity; nay, Heaven could not be Heaven without it, God the Fountain of Happiness is Love, and he communicates his Love to all the intellectual Creation; and the Love of the heavenly Host must return to their God again, for they live, and are happy only in him, and in his Love. And thence that mutual Love to each other, universal, inviolable, proceeding from that Source of Love, God blessed for ever. And therefore *St. Paul* says, *That Charity never faileth*, all other Gifts and Graces must cease, but this accompanies Men to all Eternity, this is their Work and their Delight in Heaven. Those Feuds, Strife, Hatred, and Jarrs this World has, shews us to be *sensual, earthly, devilish*, that we are in a very imperfect State; but when kind Death shall have deliver'd us from this Imperfection, nothing can remain to those sanctified by the peaceful Spirit of God, but that perfect Love and Unity, which is the Happiness, the Reward, and the Glory of God's Saints.

4. Another Comfort in Death is, that Death brings a Penitent to a Life of Devotion; true Piety is the greatest Enjoyment in this present Life, tho' here our Devotion be very imperfect, but there must needs afford us greater Joy, where our Devotion will be perfect. The Life of Heaven is a Life of Devotion, there they adore God, the God of their Salvation, in such a way and manner, as is suitable to the

the

the State of perfect Felicity: And the *Apostle* tells us, that this does consist in admiring the Nature of his Divine Being, extolling of his Praise, and never ceasing to bless and thank him for his Grace bestowed on them and their Fellow-Saints; and as the Number of the Saints increase, it continually increases their Joy to see their Brethren there, for *there is Joy in Heaven when Sinners repent on Earth*, and come by Death to that blessed Society.

Such is the State of Heaven; and so *St. John* tells us in that Representation of it, by the *four Beasts* and *Elders* mutually glorifying God; the one crying, *Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty*; the other falling down, and *worship him that liveth for ever and ever*, and all saying, *Amen, Blessing, and Glory, and Wisdom, and Thanksgiving, and Honour, and Power, and Might, be unto our God*: Which plainly shews us, that the Felicity of Heaven is their Devotion, and that Angels and Saints make that heavenly Quire to praise God and bless the Lamb that has redeem'd them with his Blood, with Anthems of Praise and Hallelujahs for ever and ever. And it is impossible for us ever to make one of that blessed Chorus, but thro' the happy Gates of Death.

5. Death brings us to the immediate Enjoyment of God and our Saviour Christ, the Communion of God is undoubtedly the chief Good of Man, and Death brings us to that Fellowship, and so is the way to our Happiness. As long as we be in this World, we see but *thro' a Glass darkly*; *here we know but in part*, but when Death has pluck'd off the false Glasses from our Eyes, remov'd the Cloud that eclips'd our Sight, we shall *behold God Face to Face*, *know him as we are known by him*, to his Glory and our Felicity. Then shall we see Judgment and Mercy, Wisdom and Power; how all were employ'd to make us happy, and how Judgments made way for our Salvation, then shall we bless God for all his Works, but especially for his gracious Severities that kept us back from Destruction, and brought us to that joyful Region where God dwells, and where he is glorified by his Saints.

So Death brings us near also to our Saviour Jesus, not only to see, behold, admire, and adore him, but

but see our selves eternally happy in that blessed Sight, there we shall see him, not in Humility, but in Glory, as the Lord of Life, the Victor over Death that died for Penitents, and *brought Life and Immortality to Light by the Gospel*, and is ready to receive every Penitent with this gracious Salute, *Come ye blessed of my Father.*

And with him we shall behold the *Host of Heaven*, the blessed Angels and Saints, the *Souls of Men made perfect*, Apostles, Prophets, Martyrs, Confessors, Penitents; there is a Communion of Saints on Earth, but much more in Heaven, where no Sin nor Temptation can break their Love, or interrupt their Felicities, there shall we meet our dear Friends, our tender Parents, our beloved Off-spring, our Brethren and Sisters that are gone before us, there shall we joyfully expect our Relations thro' Grace to follow us; nay, there perhaps we may meet with many of our Enemies, to whom we shall then be thoroughly reconciled, notwithstanding the several Differences of this present Life.

6. Another Comfort in Death is, that it brings a Penitent to that State, where he shall bear a Similitude and Resemblance of God himself. *Beloved*, says the Apostle, *Now are we the Sons of God*, and it does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know, that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is: we shall be like God in all things, as far as our finite Nature is capable of, ever with the Difference of God and his Creatures, but like him we shall be in immortal Life, like him in Holiness, like him in Knowledge, without Errour in the Mind, or Obliquity in the Will, without Disorder in the Affection, for as God is, so are his Saints, holy, righteous and good.

7. *Lastly*, Another Consolation against the Fears of Death is, that tho' our Bodies and Souls be now separated by Death, they shall not be separated for ever, they shall meet again, be re-united to enjoy the unspeakable Salvation of God to all Eternity; these Bodies which have been the Temples of God on Earth, shall be his Temples also in Heaven; those Eyes that have here bewail'd their Transgression, shall not be unregarded, God shall wipe away those
Tears,

Tears ; those Hands that have been lifted up in Prayer, shall there also be lifted up in Praise ; that Tongue that has glorified God on Earth, shall there magnify that Glory by which they are glorified in Heaven ; it is sown indeed in Corruption, but it shall be rais'd again in Incorruption, for this Corruptible must put on Incorruption, this Mortal must put on Immortality. This is the great and joyful Article of our Faith, that we are assur'd, *That tho' Worms destroy this Body, yet in my Flesh shall I see God,* when Sin and Iniquity shall be put away : *For he that*

Aug. de *quickeneth Grains of Seed for thy transitory Life, much*
 Verb. *more will he quicken thee to Eternal Life, to live with*
 Apost. 1. *him in Glory.*

34.

This Death brings us to: Were we then not to die, O how should we live ! Were we not to put off Mortality, how should we put on Immortality ? Were we not to lay down the Body of Flesh, how should we see God. Well therefore might *David* say, *That he would fear no Evil, when he walk'd in the Shadow of Death.* Well might *St. Paul* say, that *Death was his Gain.*

Was Mankind condemn'd to an Immortality here, under the Calamities of Sin, the Guilt and Judgments of God we now prove, without the Hopes of a Day of Solution and Deliverance, that Life would be exceeding bitter, more bitter than Death. But the God of Pity, that has Compassion upon his poor Creatures, has provided better things for us, a Day of Liberty, a Day of Deliverance from Sin and Death, by Death to receive us home to himself, that we may enjoy him in his Salvation ; so that Death, as it brings us to God, is so far from being terrible, that it is the Comfort of our Life that we shall die.

Such is Death to a Christian, such is Death to a Penitent ; and so the Holy Ghost assures us, that Faith and Repentance will thus enable us to look upon Death, to rejoyce in Death, and by Death to be translated to Heaven.

Remember, O Remember it for ever, that Death is never to be feared by a Penitent, our Sins separate between God and us, but our Repentance reconciles and unites God to us ; 'tis our Impenitence gives
 Death

Death its Weapons, 'tis the Want of Faith, and Want of Sorrow, opens the Jaws of Hell, and gives Satan Strength against us; but those that repose their Trust, their Faith, their Hope in the Death of Christ, embrace his Cross, and repent of their Sins, they are exempted from its Fear, for God is their Comforter.

No penitent Soul needs to fear to behold the Face of the Great Judge of the World; for *thy Judge is thy Saviour, thy Saviour is thy Judge*: He has disarm'd God's eternal Justice, he stops Vengeance, because he finds Redemption; he himself is the Propitiation for our Sins. *Heaven* is not Mount *Sinai*, where there's only Thundering, and Lightening, and Curses; *Heaven* is Mount *Sion*, where is Mercy, Love, Grace and Pardon, for the miserable Penitent; where the God of Glory, who himself tasted Death for Sinners, now liveth, and liveth for ever, and has the *Keys of Hell and Death*, to prevent any Penitents sinking there, but by Death to receive them to himself.

And therefore every Penitent has this unspeakable Comfort, that tho' he by nature be poor, miserable, and naked, and by his Sins is become more miserable, that by Faith and by Repentance, he is not in the State of Nature, nor in his Sins, but in the State of Grace, is in Jesus Christ. The Merits of Jesus is our all, his Righteousness that is our Garment, to cover our Nakedness; not only cover, but adorn us: His Glory is our Glory; and tho' we come naked into the World, and must go out naked; yet no one can appear destitute and forsaken, that by Repentance has made Jesus his Friend; for he is our all in all. O grant us, Good God, grant us this heavenly, this Divine Grace of Repentance, to keep us from Sin, and to blot out our former Transgressions, that we may live and die true Penitents.

I come now to the third and last Part I purpos'd; and that is, to apply it to you that art under the Condemnation of Death, and also to our selves.

And first to you, that art under the just Condemnation of Death, it is your Duty,

1. To look upon the Cause of this Judgment, this

untimely End ; and that is, your Sins, your many and repeated Sins, have brought this Destruction upon you. God has been very gracious unto you, patient, long-suffering, full of Compassion and Mercy, that the Goodness of God might have led you to Repentance : But the more gracious God was, the more wicked you was ; and therefore God has suffer'd you to fall into this Sin, and brought this Judgment upon you. *Woe be to you, for you have wrought Evil to your self :* You have rob'd your self of Life, and destroy'd your Son ; you have made your Wife a Widow, and your Children fatherless ; a bloody Husband, and a graceless Father ; you have brought Reproach and Scandal to your Offspring. And this is yet the least Destruction, this is but temporal, but there's an eternal Judgment and Destruction hangs over your Head, if you prevent it not by a serious Repentance. The Tribunal of Man is very terrible ; but what is that to the Terrors of God's Judgment, before whom the Earth trembles, and the Heavens fly away. *The Ax is now laid to the Root,* God will hew you down ; O take heed therefore what Fruit you bring forth ; before the Stroke be struck, destroy not your Soul, as you have done your Body ; have Compassion on your immortal Soul, hurl not your self into Damnation. Sin destroys the Soul as well as the Body ; by suffering in the Flesh, the Soul is not purified ; by our temporal Death, we cannot redeem our Souls out of God's Hand : No, our Death brings us to that Judgment, and therefore your Work must be done before you go out of this World.

God has not yet sworn that you should not enter into his Rest, he has not excluded you from Repentance ; he calls you to it even by this Judgment, and gives you Means of Grace, and Time even abundantly in Compassion to your Soul, that you may more and more repent and be saved. Justify God in your Judgment ; just and righteous is he, but you are a Sinner : Nay, bless God for this Judgment, bless him, that he has not cut you off with a hasty sudden Death. How justly might he have pluck'd your Soul from you, when you destroy'd the Life of your Child, and sent you in a moment to Damnation,

tion, when you spill'd the Blood of your Son ; but he has been more gracious to you. Grant, O God, that this thy Grace may tend to the Glory of thy Name, and the Good of his Soul.

Humble your self before your God : Sins cry to Heaven for Vengeance, all Sins do, but especially the Sin of Murder ; and therefore let your Prayers, your Tears and Repentance cry to Heaven for Mercy, *Mercy and no Judgment*. Your Repentance must outcry your Sins : *From Blood-guiltiness deliver me, O God of my Salvation*. Put your trust in the Merits of Jesus Christ, he is the only Saviour of the World, his Blood can only wash away your Sins, his Sacrifice is the only Atonement for your Transgressions : Let that Blood be all your Hopes, all your Desire ; for that's the Fountain of Life against all Uncleaness.

And if you be really penitent, and confess your Sins, if you be truly sorrowful for your Offences, God will receive you, he will comfort you. None seeks God's Face in vain, he does not cast away a Penitent, he rejoices to receive him ; he will give you the Comfort of Grace, shew himself gracious to you, a Father of Mercies, that has adopted you for a Child of Mercy : And if so, Death will not be terrible to you ; terrible to Flesh and Blood it will be, but the greatest Terrors proceed from an evil Conscience, from Guilt and Offences, from a Sense of God's Judgment : But if we have and do repent, and our Hearts condemn us not of Impenitence, we have Confidence towards God, Confidence in this, that the Death of Jesus will sanctify my Death, that it may be a Passage for my immortal Soul to eternal Glory. Redeem then now the Time, and renew your Peace with God : O count your Days, your Hours, your Minutes, for they be but few, and apply your Heart to Wisdom : Look back upon the Days, Months, and Years mis-spent : Look how little time there is between you and Eternity ; repent therefore the more earnest, pray without ceasing, meditate and think on Death, let no outward Troubles overwhelm your Mind, nor Shame nor Disgrace, nor Terrors of Death, cause you to despair : Trust in God, he is merciful and faithful ; he will not forsake

you in the Pangs of Death ; he will be with you, a God to you, in the Hour of Death, and in the Day of Judgment.

Take good Courage therefore, O thou afflicted ! but not forsaken ; thou chastised, but not refused ! and be not affrighted at the sight of Death. Thou seest a narrow Passage, a Way beset with Thorns and Terrors, a Way of Disgrace and Shame ; but if you truly repent, it is the Gate of Heaven, it is the Way that leads the Soul to Paradise. We must go through the Vally of Tears before we can come to the joyful City of God : We must pass through many Tribulations to the Kingdom of Glory. Blessed are they, whom God afflicts and punishes for their Sins in this World, that they may be deliver'd from eternal Destruction, and comforted in the World to come. God sends thee this Judgment, this grievous Departure for thy good, cuts thee off out of the Land of the Living, that thy Soul may not be blotted out of the Book of Life : For it may, I trust through Jesus, be said of this thy Judgment, as it was said of *Lazarus* his Distemper, this Judgment is not to Death, but for the Glory of God ; not to eternal Death, but that God may be glorified in your Conversion. Had not the Thief come to the Cross, he had not known Christ ; had not you come to the Gallows, it is to be fear'd you had never repented.

Prepare your self to die : Faith and Repentance are the Conditions of the Gospel ; one blots out all your Sins, the other gives you a Right to Glory : If you have these, happy are you ; then you may look Death in the Face. *O Death, where is thy Sting ? O Grave, where is thy Victory ?* Then you may say, Since I must now walk in the Vally of the Shadow of Death, Father, thy Will be done. Forsake me not, O my God : I fear no Evil, now thou art reconciled to my Soul. I repent me of all my Sins, and I know that thou never forsakeest the Penitents. My God, be therefore with me, leave me not comfortless ; let me find my God at the Execution-place ; let it be to me the Gate of Heaven ; and tho' full of Terrors, let my Soul find Peace, because thou art there. Make me to be above Fear, strengthen my Faith, uphold my Spirits, support my Confidence in thee ;
let

let Death be what it will, so thou, Jesus, art but with me, thou art my all, my Comfort, my Hope, my Glory, my Joy; Death cannot be terrible where thou my Jesus, my Saviour, art. *O God, in thy Hands I commend my Spirit, for thou hast redeemed me*; in thee, O my Saviour, do I put my Trust, O save my Soul, and let me never be confounded. O Good God, enlighten thou his Eyes, that he may see thee that art invisible, and find thee his God a God of Comfort there; that he may see thy blessed Angels, to receive his Soul, thou that hast Healing under thy Wings. O heal his Soul, and cover him from Judgment, and let the Light of Grace here dawn in his Heart, that the Light of this transitory Life being put out, he may be enlighten'd with the Light of thy Glory, O God, remember what thy dear Son has done for him, and forget, dear God, what this evil Servant has done against thee.

And now give me Leave to say a Word to our selves, and to you, that are come both to see this miserable Object, and to hear what is said to him, and I hope to assist and help him with your Prayers and Intercession to God for him: Look upon him: Look upon him with Sorrow and Amazement, and see what is the Reward of Sin; see what is the sad Consequence of forsaking God, and tremble at his Judgment. He once thought as little of falling into such a deplorable State, and coming to an untimely and scandalous End, as any one: He thought himself very secure, and cried Peace to his Soul, and sat easy in his Sins; but God has found him out, and sets him before our Eyes as an Example of his Hatred of Sin, that we may stand in Awe, and tremble before God.

Felix quem faciunt aliena pericula cautum.

He's happy that can avoid a Judgment at another's Expence. O take heed and be wise, by this Example: The Apostle tells us, that Examples in Scripture both of Sinners and Saints, are set before us for our Admonition, that we may avoid the Sin of one, and follow the Piety of others.

God

God has now set this Example before us, that we may take Warning that we fall not in his Sins, lest we fall in his Judgment also. Remember the Saying of the Prophet, *When thy Judgments are upon Earth, the Inhabitants of the World will learn Righteousness*; that's the Use you are to make of this Judgment, to learn Righteousness, to stand in awe, and

Eccl. 12. 1. *fin not against God. Remember, therefore, thy Creator in the Days of thy Youth, while the evil Days come not, and the Years draw nigh when thou shalt say I have no Pleasure in them. And lay to Heart what the same Solomon tells you, Rejoice, O young Man in thy Youth, and let thy Heart cheer thee in the Days of thy Youth, and walk in the Ways of thy Heart, and in the Sight of thine Eyes, but know thou that for all these things God will bring thee into Judgment.*

There's many of you that are acquainted with his Life and Conversation for several Years, see what it is come to; how Justice has overtaken him, how God has found him out: See, see the bad Consequence of wilful Ignorance, of mis-spending and profaning the Lord's Day: See the sad Effect of Drunkenness. Now judge ye that pass by, if Solomon's Prediction of Drunkenness proves not true, *that at the last it biteth like a Serpent, and stingeth like an Adder.* See the Judgment on Cursing and Swearing; see the Consequence of Wrath, Envy, Malice, Hatred, Passion and Fury! O my God, to what a sad Catalogue does this arise? Dear Jesus, pardon all these Sins in him, and give us Grace to avoid them.

O forget not, therefore, this thy Neighbour, thy Acquaintance; stumble not over those Blocks that have made him fall; embrace not that Serpent that has so mortally stung him; hug not that Fire in your Bosom that has destroy'd him; else your Sins will be the greater, because God reproveth you by him: There is the same God to overtake you, the same all-seeing Eye that can find you out, the same almighty Hand to bring you to Punishment; but we hope for better things of you.

And therefore set the Law of God continually before your Eyes; let that be your Guide, that's the Rule to walk by. *Follow not a Multitude to do evil.* Follow God and Christ Jesus, and that will give you Peace

Peace at the last. Avoid all Sin, nay the very first Occasions to Sin; the Devil leads us on by Degrees, if he can but perswade us willingly to fall in little Sins, he has smoothing Temptations to bring us easily to greater: No, remember that the least Sin will damn us, unrepented of; there are no little Sins, tho' some greater than others; the least, as we esteem them, are of terrible Consequence. Let us therefore make it our Business to repent daily, and not daily increase our Iniquities.

And since we trust in Christ that this Judgment is come upon this Man, for the Good of his Soul, to lead him to Repentance, let us both bury his Sins, and the Manner of his Death, in eternal Oblivion. I hope to God none will be so unwise, so void of Grace, at any time hereafter, to reflect upon the Widow and Children, by twitting or reproaching them with this Affliction; no, add not Grief to Grief, Sorrow to Sorrow; double not a Cup of Bitterness to them; it is his temporal Misfortune, we hope his eternal Gain: Let not that which may be Glory and Salvation to his Soul, become a Reproach and Scandal to his Offspring, no rather endeavour to comfort, assist and support this afflicted Widow and Children, with good Christian Charity, Advice, Help, and Council, if at any time they be in need of it: Pray to God for them, that it may be sanctified to every one of their Souls, that they may by it be brought home to God, and may in God's time again meet their Husband, Father and Friend, in God's Glory.

Let us all remember our latter End; we must all die, God in his Mercy fit us for it; let us live in his Fear, and we shall die in his Favour. Let us die daily, live as those that must die, and come to Judgment; so live in this present World, that we may neither be ashamed that we have lived, nor afraid to die. And because, through the Frailty of our Nature, we can do nothing good, nothing acceptable to God, without the Assistance of his Grace; and since he has promised to assist us, let us continually pray and implore the Grace of his holy Spirit, to lead us in the Way of his Will, and the Works of his Commandments, that when ever we must walk thro' the

Consolations, &c.

the Valley of the Shadow of Death, we may fear no Evil, God may be with us, his Rod and his Staff comfort us.

And let us remember particularly this afflicted Person in our Prayers; intercede for him with God, that he would strengthen him in his Faith, further him in his Repentance, comfort him with his holy Spirit, speak Peace to his Soul, let us recommend him to the infinite merciful Bowels of God's Compassion, to the Arms of a dear Redeemer, that has shed his Blood for him. Who knows? God may be intreated, he has promised to hear Prayers, he may have Mercy upon him; and tho' we have a mournful melancholy Parting, we may, through Christ, have a joyful and happy Meeting again, in Heaven, which God grant for Christ his sake. *Amen.*

Now to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, our great God and Saviour, be all Honour and Glory, Praise, Might, Majesty, Thanksgiving and Dominion, both now and for evermore. Amen.

FINIS.

no
n-

r-
l,
er
y
d
n-
as
y
e
a
h
n
1-

oe
ll'
'
r